

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 128591

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S E C R E T STATE 128591

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (MALIK, DR. CHARLES)
SUBJ: SECRETARY ROGER'S MEETING WITH DR. CHARLES MALIK

REF: BEIRUT 7203

1. SUMMARY: DR. CHARLES MALIK MET WITH SECRETARY JUNE 26
TO CONVEY MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FRANGIE. MESSAGE WAS THAT
LEBANON IS BESET WITH FUNDAMENTAL THREATS TO ITS POLITICAL
INDEPENDENCE AND THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE WANTED TO KNOW HOW
FAR THE US WAS WILLING TO GO TO SUPPORT LEBANON'S INTEGRITY
IN CERTAIN CONTINGENCIES. SECRETARY REITERATED US SUPPORT
FOR LEBANON AND SAID USG PREPARED TO BE AS RESPONSIVE AS
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 128591

POSSIBLE TO LEBANON'S NEEDS, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF THE
GOL'S RECENT REQUEST FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. HOWEVER,
SECRETARY MADE CLEAR USG COULD NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION OF
THE LIMITS OF US SUPPORT IN CERTAIN CONTINGENCIES HYPOTHE-

TICALLY. THE USG, THE SECRETARY SAID, WOULD CONSIDER THE THREATS TO LEBANON AS THEY ACTUALLY DEVELOP AND WOULD CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE LEBANESE IN ORDER TO BE AS HELPFUL AS WE CAN WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS UNDER WHICH THE USG MUST OPERATE. END SUMMARY.

2. DR. CHARLES MALIK, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER OF LEBANON, HAD A MEETING AT HIS REQUEST WITH SECRETARY ROGERS ON JUNE 26 AT THE DEPARTMENT. AMBASSADOR BUFFUM AND OFFICER

FROM NEA/ARN WERE PRESENT. MALIK STATED THAT HE HAD SEEN PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND OTHER TOP LEVEL LEBANESE OFFICIALS PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM LEBANON AND THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE ASKED HIM FORMALLY TO SPEAK IN HIS NAME. MALIK SAID FRANGIE, FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUHAMAD AND LEBANESE ARMY COMMANDER GHANEM, WERE SINCERELY GRATEFUL FOR U.S. POLITICAL AND MILITARY SUPPORT FOR LEBANON DURING LATEST CRISIS AND THAT USG'S FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING WERE SINCERELY APPRECIATED. MALIK CONVEYED FRANGIE'S PERSONAL THANKS FOR SECRETARY'S LETTER OF SUPPORT DURING MAY CRISIS.

3. CONCERNING U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT FOR LEBANON, MALIK SAID BOTH PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND GENERAL GHANEM HOPED USG WOULD RESPOND PROMPTLY TO GOL'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WOULD BE DONE TO CUT DOWN THE "RED TAPE" BARRING PROMPT DELIVERIES OF SUCH EQUIPMENT. MALIK COMMENTED GOL APPRECIATED HELP OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BEIRUT IN THE DRAWING UP OF THE LISTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH THE LEBANESE ARMY NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, MALIK SAID FRANGIE AND GHANEM HOPE THAT USG WILL GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE LEBANESE REQUEST FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND TANKS.

4. MALIK, READING FROM NOTES, THEN SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO GO TO THE LARGER ISSUES INVOLVING THE DANGERS THAT BESET LEBANON. MALIK SAID PRESIDENT FRANGIE BELIEVES
SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 128591

THE FEDAYEEN CONSTITUTE THE GREATEST AND MOST PERMANENT DANGER LEBANON FACES. THE FEDAYEEN ARE BETTER ARMED THAN THE LEBANESE ARMY AND ARE RECEIVING ARMS FROM SYRIA AND IRAQ WHICH ARE ULTIMATELY PROVIDED FROM SOVIET AND CHINESE COMMUNIST SOURCES. THESE ARMS ARE DISTRIBUTED NOT ONLY TO THE FEDAYEEN BUT TO LEFTIST, RADICAL ANTI-AMERICAN GROUPS IN LEBANON. SYRIA, DR. MALIK SAID, PRESENTS THE SECOND GREATEST THREAT TO LEBANON. THE SYRIANS DO NOT RECOGNIZE LEBANON'S INDEPENDENCE AND THEY CONTINUE TO GRIND THE IDEOLOGICAL AXE THAT LEBANON SHOULD BE ASSIMILATED INTO THE SYRIAN SYSTEM AND ENTITY. PRESIDENT FRANGIE REFUSES, MALIK SAID, TO HAVE SYRIA DICTATE TO LEBANON WHAT THE GOL'S INTERNAL POLICY SHOULD BE

AND WHO SHOULD BE THE LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER AND WHO SHOULD BE NAMED TO THE LEBANESE CABINET. THE THIRD THREAT, MALIK SAID, WAS COL. QHADDAFI'S ANTI-GOL POLICY WHICH WAS BACKED UP BY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WHICH THE LIBYANS SEND TO GROUPS IN LEBANON WITH THE AIM OF HAVING THE LEBANESE REGIME OVERTHROWN AND HAVING LEBANON BECOME A MUSLIM STATE. THE FOURTH THREAT TO LEBANON STEMS FROM RADICAL, LEFT-WING GROUPS WHICH HAVE INCREASED LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE GRADUAL

WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THESE GROUPS ARE LED BY THE LEFTIST DRUZE POLITICIAN KAMAL JUMBLATT WHO, MALIK SAID, IS A STRANGE CHARACTER WHO PROBABLY HIMSELF DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HE WANTS. MALIK LISTED THE OTHER THREATS TO LEBANON AS SOVIET AND COMMUNIST CHINESE ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON IN SUPPORT OF THE FEDAYEEN AND LEFT-WING GROUPS, ISRAELI TERRITORIAL INTENTIONS TOWARD SOUTHERN LEBANON, THE WIDESPREAD MORAL CORRUPTION IN LEBANON, AND THE DELICATE CONFESSIONAL BALANCE WHICH CAN BE DISRUPTED AND RESULT IN CIVIL STRIFE.

5. MALIK SAID LEBANON IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE PRESIDENT FRANGIE IN POWER AT THIS TIME BECAUSE FRANGIE IS PREPARED TO FACE AND OVERCOME ALL THE THREATS TO LEBANON'S SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE. THE PRESENCE OF A STRONG AND DETERMINED PRESIDENT IN LEBANON IS A NEW SITUATION. FRANGIE HAS THREE MORE YEARS UNTIL THE END OF HIS MANDATE AND, MALIK SAID, LEBANON SHOULD NOT MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 128591

TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS RESOLUTE CHARACTER.

6. DR. MALIK SAID HE HAD COME TO THE MAIN SUBSTANCE OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S MESSAGE: SPECIFICALLY, IF THE U.S. WANTS LEBANON TO CONTINUE TO EXIST AS A FREE COUNTRY ORIENTED TO THE VALUES OF THE U.S. AND THE WEST, IN GENERAL, PRESIDENT FRANGIE ASKS THE U.S. TO HELP LEBANON IN PRESERVING ITS FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE. IN THIS RESPECT, PRESIDENT FRANGIE DEEPLY APPRECIATED SECRETARY ROGER'S LETTER TO HIM DURING THE MAY CRISIS. THE CRUCIAL QUESTION, MALIK SAID, WHICH FRANGIE POSES TO THE USG IS HOW FAR IS THE USG PREPARED TO GO TO HELP LEBANON RETAIN ITS FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE. THE GOL IS INFORMED OF THE USG POSITION ON ISRAELI INTENTIONS TOWARD LEBANON. HOWEVER, FRANGIE WANTS TO FIND OUT WHAT THE USG ITSELF WOULD DO IN EITHER OF TWO FOLLOWING CONTINGENCIES: (A) IF SYRIA INVADED LEBANON; AND (B) IF PALESTINIAN ACTIONS LED TO THE IMMINENT COLLAPSE OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. ALSO, DR. MALIK SAID, PRESIDENT FRANGIE WISHES TO KNOW WHAT THE U.S. WOULD DO TO HELP PREVENT THESE CONTINGENCIES FROM ARISING IN ADVANCE.

7. DR. MALIK THEN CONVEYED HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEW WHICH

HE SAID WAS ALSO THE VIEW OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE, THAT IF LEBANON IS DESTROYED, OR RADICALIZED POLITICALLY, OR ASSIMILATED INTO SYRIA, OR TAKEN OVER BY THE PALESTINIANS, IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR LEBANON PER SE AND WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE U.S. LEBANON'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON SYRIA IS BECOMING A MAJOR CONCERN TO LEBANON AND SOME LEBANESE ARE THINKING OF SCHEMES TO

LESSEN THIS DEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP ON SYRIA AND ARE EVEN TALKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIRECT TERRITORIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN LEBANON AND JORDAN TO EASE LEBANON'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP TO SYRIA. HOWEVER, LEBANON CAN NEVER TRULY BE SECURE UNTIL THERE IS (A) PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG ISRAEL, JORDAN, LEBANON AND SYRIA; (B) ACCOMMODATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ISRAELI CULTURE AND ISLAMIC CULTURE; AND (C) UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE THREE GREAT RELIGIONS OF THE AREA (CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 128591

AND JUDAISM). IF A "LAND BRIDGE" CAN BE BUILT TO JOIN THESE FORCES, MALIK SAID, THEN MANKIND WILL HAVE PASSED FROM CONSIDERATION OF SURFACE PHENOMENA TO CONSIDERATION OF THE HEART OF THE MIDDLE EAST'S PROBLEMS.

8. SECRETARY ROGERS SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET DR. MALIK AND TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S MESSAGE. SECRETARY SAID THAT COMING TO GRIPS WITH FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES UNDERLYING A DURABLE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ALL. THE USG, THE SECRETARY SAID, HAS TRIED TO BRING ABOUT A MORE RATIONAL CONSIDERATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL AREA PROBLEMS. IN TERMS OF ESTABLISHING A CEASEFIRE WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, THE SECRETARY SAID, BUT UNFORTUNATELY WE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF REACHING A TOTAL SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. OF COURSE, ONE MUST ASK ONESELF, THE SECRETARY SAID, IF THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A SOLUTION AS DR. MALIK DESCRIBED. WHEN ONE GOES TO THE MIDDLE EAST ONE SEES FIRST-HAND THE DEPTH OF CONTROVERSIES THAT HAVE LASTED FOR CENTURIES.

9. CONCERNING THE U. S. RESPONSE TO LEBANON'S MILITARY EQUIPMENT NEEDS, THE SECRETARY SAID WE ARE DOING ALL THAT WE CAN TO ELIMINATE ANY RED TAPE HINDERING OUR PROMPT RESPONSE TO THE LEBANESE. HOWEVER, WHAT WE CAN DO FOR LEBANON IS NOT OPEN-ENDED. WE HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO EXPEDITE THE DELIVERY OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT MILITARY ITEMS THAT THE GOL HAS REQUESTED AND ARE EXAMINING ALL OUTSTANDING REQUESTS FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT SYMPATHETICALLY AND ON AN URGENT BASIS. SECRETARY ROGERS SAID WE WANT TO BE AS HELPFUL AS WE CAN TO LEBANON AND EMPHASIZED THAT WAS PRESIDENT NIXON'S ATTITUDE, HIS OWN ATTITUDE AND THAT OF THE DEPARTMENT.

10. SECRETARY ROGERS TOLD MALIK THAT HE APPRECIATED THE CLEAR AND ACCURATE EXPLANATION OF THE DANGERS AND PROBLEMS LEBANON FACES. HOWEVER, SECRETARY ROGERS POINTED OUT THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA ARE NOW MUCH BETTER THAN BEFORE AND THAT THESE IMPROVED

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 128591

RELATIONS CAN HELP REDUCE THE RISKS TO COUNTRIES SUCH AS LEBANON. WE HOPE, SECRETARY STATED, THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY/FEDAYEEN AGREEMENT OF MAY 17 CAN BE COMPLIED WITH. SOME OF THE PROBLEMS FACING LEBANON FROM THE FEDAYEEN THREAT CAN BE RESOLVED AS LONG AS PRESIDENT FRANGIE CONTINUES TO GIVE THE COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP HE HAS ALREADY DISPLAYED. WHAT HAS BEEN LACKING IS THE CREATION OF A STRONG GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON WHICH CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY FACE UP TO THE FEDAYEEN THREAT. WE FULLY AGREE WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING LEBANON'S POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY. LEBANON IS A NATION WHICH IS RESPECTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND WE APPRECIATE THE PROGRESS THE GOL HAS MADE IN BRINGING THE FEDAYEEN UNDER MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL.

11. SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING THE QUESTION ON HOW FAR THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO GO TO SUPPORT LEBANON, THE SECRETARY STATED THAT WE CANNOT ANSWER THAT QUESTION HYPOTHETICALLY. EVER SINCE THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION, THE SECRETARY SAID, WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED OUR CLOSENESS TO LEBANON. AS SPECIFIC THREATS AND DANGERS DEVELOP, WE WILL CONSIDER THEM AND CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE LEBANESE IN ORDER TO BE AS HELPFUL AS WE CAN TO LEBANON WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS UNDER WHICH THE USG MUST OPERATE. AS FAR AS THE USG IS CONCERNED, LEBANON REMAINS A CLOSE AND IMPORTANT FRIEND. OUR POLICY, THE SECRETARY CONCLUDED, IS REFLECTED IN AMBASSADOR BUFFUM'S ATTITUDE AND THAT OF OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT.

12. DR. MALIK THANKED SECRETARY ROGERS FOR MEETING WITH HIM AND STATED HE WOULD CONVEY THE SECRETARY'S REMARKS TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE. ROGERS

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